

27th November 2020

Aftermath

“Life is just one damned thing after another!”

Elbert Hubbard, Philistine, 1909

After the recent US Presidential election, my wife and I had one of our regular *Facetime* calls with American friends. As usual, we talked politics – a lot! – and religion, and shared laughter, ideas and news. And the word “aftermath” was used. How will things pan out in the aftermath of the US election? What will emerge in the aftermath of bitterness and rancour?

“Aftermath” is on our minds these days. What kind of world will appear in the aftermath of Covid-19? What will the aftermath be like when a vaccine is widely available? How will we cope with personal changes in the aftermath of our struggles? Will there be an aftermath in UK politics? Elbert Hubbard is right. It *feels* like it’s “just one damned thing after another”. And the aftermath of each “damned thing” is hard to figure.

Our American friends quoted the lyrics of “The Great Storm is Over”, a song from the American singer-songwriter, John McCutcheon. It’s in his 1989 album, *Water from Another Time*, and contains these words:

*Sweetness in the air and justice on the wind;
Laughter in the house where the mourners have been.
The deaf shall have music, the blind have new eyes,
The standards of death taken down by surprise.*

*Release for the captives, an end to the wars,
New streams in the desert, new hope for the poor,
The little lame children will dance as they sing,
And play with the bears and the lions in spring.*

Alleluia, the great storm is over, lift up your wings and fly!

The aftermath? It’s the promise of the prophet Isaiah and the ringing endorsement of Jesus. When our great storm is over, there *will* be justice and laughter, we *will* be surprised by peace and hope, children *will* dance and sing, and the bears and lions *will* play together. And ... in the aftermath of our great storm, we will lift up our wings, and we *will* fly!

A prayer for today

God of the past, thank you for loving us. God of the present, thank you for staying with us. God of every aftermath, go with us into our unknown future. Amen.

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